

EN REPOS
AND
ELSEWHERE OVER THERE

LANSING WARREN AND
ROBERT A. DONALDSON



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En Repos and Elsewhere Over There

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EN REPOS AND ELSEWHERE OVER THERE

VERSES WRITTEN IN FRANCE
1917-1918

BY
LANSING WARREN AND
ROBERT A. DONALDSON

*With a Preface by
Major A. Piatt Andrew*



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TO
THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE
WHICH FOR THREE YEARS
SO LOYALLY RENDERED SERVICE
TO FRANCE

PREFACE

The verses here collected "need no bush." They evidence what they are — the reflections, now playful, now serious, of typical American youth upon the surroundings of life on the French Front. They were written by two members of one of the many volunteer ambulance sections of the American Field Service, who came to this organization from Leland Stanford University and who served in and with the French Army long before American troops were operating in France. Subsequently the sections of the American Field Service were adopted by the American Army, though left to serve with the French divisions, and the authors of these versés, along with many hundred other former volunteers, were enlisted as American soldiers.

Most of these verses were printed originally in the "American Field Service Bulletin," a small weekly published in France by volunteers of the Field Service for their own and their comrades' amusement. Not having been written for readers at home, but for the severely critical and somewhat blasé eyes of comrades, they contain few allusions to shot and shell, and the thrills and horrors of war. Journalists and novelists, writing for the home market, have naturally selected for description only the dramatic and heroic aspects of the war and have frequently conveyed an impression of life at the Front which, even though literally true of special times and places, is by no means representative of the normal experiences. The circumstances under which these verses were written are such as to give them a kind of documental value as true exhibits of a soldier's life and thoughts. They show, what the public seldom realizes, that the military drama includes only brief moments of intense and tragic action where heroism and valor are displayed, but that it consists mostly of inter-

Preface

minable cntr'actes in which much more commonplace virtues are called upon to play their part — such virtues as patience, self-control, cheerfulness, and a sense of humor.

*“This war would be extremely drear
If we had not long since begun
To view events that happen here
Transfigured by our sense of fun.”*

They show, too, beneath the light-heartedness that jests at everything — the light-heartedness typical of healthy-minded youth the world over, and fortunately as typical of our American soldiers as of the soldiers of France — the keen desire to voice the solemn meaning of this war, the meaning which, though often unexpressed, lies deeply rooted in the consciousness of all our troops.

*“Come, come, O Bard, from out some unknown place,
Come and record, in songs and words of fire,
The noble deaths, the struggles of the race,
The fight to check an Emperor's desire!
Come, strike thy harp; the force of man is hurled; —
Give us an Iliad of the Western World!”*

Beneath an obvious contempt for rhetoric and heroics, which is equally characteristic of the soldier, is also revealed that love and admiration for France which grows every day more strong among all Americans who have had the privilege of knowing the soldiers and people of France during these prodigious years.

*“You may take your men in khaki,
Your men in brown and grey,
They're first-class fighting soldiers —
They'll prove it any day!
We'll honor every one of them
For all that they've been through,
But you'll have to give the laurels
To the Overcoats of Blue!*

*“Oh, the Overcoats of Blue! The Overcoats of Blue!
They're the finest fighting soldiers, are the Overcoats of Blue!”*

Preface

The romance and splendor of France's history, the unfailing idealism and unfaltering will of her people, the democracy, the comradeship, and above all the unvaunting but indomitable courage of her troops, have kindled something akin to veneration in the hearts of our soldiers. And every American soldier who has seen with his eyes the suffering so wantonly and brutally inflicted upon this gentle country by the Huns has also felt with Jeanne d'Arc something of that "grande pitié qu'il y avait au pays de France."

*"Oh, it is n't in words that we show it, —
They're too feeble to tell what we feel;
It's down in our hearts that we know it,
It's down in our souls that it's real.
So we stick to our work as we find it,
And forget the caprices of Chance,
For we know that the price of the big sacrifice
Is little enough — for France!"*

A. PIATT ANDREW

France, July, 1918

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INTRODUCING "EN REPOS AND ELSEWHERE"

When an American starts for France he usually leaves home and hope at the same time. He has visions of a feverish, dashing existence under a continual rain of projectiles, machine-gun bullets, poison-gas, and high explosives. He expects to spend most of the time advancing or retreating or rushing on to Berlin, and between charges he expects to occupy his leisure moments extricating himself from barbed-wire entanglements, picking fleas from his garments, and exploring by night the wastes of No Man's Land, knee-deep in mud and gore. He expects to do his reading and letter-writing (if indeed he should ever do either) on the firing-step of a front-line trench by the intermittent light of star-shells and gun-flashes.

But if the realities of the Front in any degree approached one's preconceived ideas of its perils, the armies of both sides would long ago have been annihilated to a man, and the politicians alone would have been left to bicker over the boundaries of unpopulated states.

After a short sojourn in the war zone, the soldier comes to the realization that a good part of the time not only is there scarcely any element of danger, but also scarcely any element of interest. And presently he learns the meaning of "en repos." He finds that he must spend anywhere from half to three quarters of his valuable time "resting" in some half-forgotten village in the rear. Sometimes, after a trick in the line when something has "been doing," this "repos" is very grateful. But it is soon made plain to the soldier that he is supposed to rest whether he is tired or not, and often "repos"

Introduction

becomes more fatiguing, mentally at least, than the more strenuous duties of active service.

The reason for this is the more or less limited opportunity for diversion that "repos" affords. In the first place, there is work, which is sometimes quite baldly invented for the purpose of keeping him occupied. Or he can walk, the extent of his perambulations being usually confined to the "limit of the cantonment." There is the alternative of participation in the endless games of chance, always in high favor subsequent to pay-day. Of course there is reading, but current publications, with their insistence upon matters pertaining to the war, and their obvious ignorance of the real facts, get on his nerves. He cares not to be "awakened to the realities of the situation." He does not want to hear the patriotic utterances of the journalists at home. Congressional quibbles over elementary military preparations do not interest him very much when he is confronted with actualities. As for the classics, the soldier will ever distrust them. This exhausts his ordinary amusements, for the soldier soon gets tired of repeating the same conversations with poilus, and letter-writing becomes an irksome obligation.

It is on this account that many (and among them may be humbly classed the authors) are driven, perforce, to "literary" production. It is a sort of last resort to sit down and turn out an irreverent verse about the war. It is his only retaliation against a heartless world for many hours of tedious boredom. But it is a poor revenge, for of course the world need not, and probably will not, read it.

This is our only excuse for the present volume, which contains the ill-begotten fruits of many a "repos." We should like to state that these verses were written in the midst of heavy fighting, shell-fire, and destruction. We should like to tell stories of verses scribbled in the star-shell light, and by the

Introduction

lightning flashes of the guns. But the soul which is supposed to evidence its emotions during moments of stress by soaring into verse, more commonly evidences them by soaring into the nearest "abri," where it remains in nervous discomfort until the bombardment is over. There is and will be but little literature from the actual trenches.

Many of these verses were originally written for and published in the "American Field Service Bulletin." They make no pretensions beyond the expression of the thoughts and passing observations of two ambulance-drivers.

Not wishing to be considered mercenary, the authors omit to give any other justification for this volume.

LANSING WARREN
ROBERT A. DONALDSON

France, 1917-18

EN REPOS

EN REPOS

WHEN you join the Ambulance,
You have visions of a dance
 With the *obus*, mitrailleuse, and aero bomb;
You expect a time exciting,
Being always where there's fighting,
 Where the big attack is always on the go;
But before you do your bit
You will learn the truth of it —
 It's not the front that's deadly,
 But *repos*!

En repos! En repos!
Oh, you're always in the bushes *en repos*!
Just evacuation work
Which you'd always rather shirk,
 And fatigue and other nuisances well known;
You forever cool your heels
In those endless poker deals,
 Or talk around the stove for hours on end;
It's a sleepy, deadly life —
You'd much rather have the strife
 Than existence where Dame Rumor
 Is the only thing that's rife;

En Repos

The front is hell, you know,
But you 'd always rather go
Toward the trenches and the star-shells
Than *repos* !

When the *blessés* come in thick,
And you have to take them quick
From the "poste" to "opital" and back for
more ;
When you get the needed sleep
And you 're in it good and deep,
And a call comes in, and out again you go ;
Then you have your fill of it,
But it 's better than to sit
En repos !

En repos ! En repos !
Back again to some dead village *en repos* !
Oh, it looks good from the front
When you have to bear the brunt
Of the *blessés* when they 're going o'er the top ;
When they start a big attack
And the wounded stream on back,
Oh, you wish for all the rest you ever got ;
But when you 're in the rear
And the front is nowhere near

En Repos

And the noise of “ beaucoup argument ”
Is all the noise you hear —
Oh, it's those times that you know
That you 'd really rather go
Toward the trenches and the star-shells
Than *repos* !

ENVOI

There's a line of trenches stretching
From the Swiss land to the sea,
And there's many torn and wounded
And there's work for you and me.
So we daily wait for orders
Which will say, ere long, we know,
That we're headed toward the trenches
And the star-shells —
Off *repos* !

A DUFFER'S DUFFLE

A TANGLED mess of shirts and socks,
Underwear, shoe-strings, neckties and stocks,
A bottle of something heaved in by chance,
All wrapped up in a pair of pants.
A U.S. "unie" that would n't fit,
A knitted sweater that came unknit,
Stamps and envelopes, paper and books,
Flea-powder (spilled), some pins and hooks,
A pair of shoes, a cake of soap,
A rubber basin, a coil of rope,
A pack of cards, and some dirty puttees,
One of those dog-goned diaries,
Postcards, a *briquet à poilu* made,
The stock of a German hand-grenade,
A copy of President Wilson's speech,
Some stuff at the bottom I could n't reach —
All of it tumbled in wild confusion,
Bought in a moment of mad delusion;
Junk that is n't worth while to drag —
The duffle in my duffle-bag!

BRANCARDIERS

I USED to think that stretcher-bearers
Had a soft and easy life —
That they could always keep away
From all the hell and strife.
But now I've seen the work they do,
And all the risks they run,
I'll hand them more for service than
The man who packs a gun.
Oh, it's no easy job to care
For *blessés* and for *morts*,
But for all their work's so rotten,
They're a dead game bunch of sports.

They may not have to charge the Boche
Or hold a trench somewhere,
But when there's any work to do
They always are right there.
When hell is popping at the front,
And shells are flopping fast,
They're on the job, and stick it out
Until the row is past.

En Repos

It's not a pleasant job they've got,
With *blessés* and with *morts*,
But for all they're not the fighters,
They're a dead game bunch of sports.

When all are in the *abris*, and
The shells are falling thick,
And a 'phone call says there's wounded
They go out without a kick.
And if they're shelling still, they just
Pull down their lids of tin,
And go where the poor devil fell,
And try to bring him in.
Oh, more than once it's happened
They're themselves among the *morts* —
But they grin and shrug their shoulders,
Like a dead game bunch of sports.

It's not a joyous job to go
Out into No Man's Land,
But when there's wounded, they are there
To try and lend a hand.
Their job most always takes them where
There's been a lot of harm,
And the *obus*'s no respecter of
The red cross on the arm.

Brancardiers

Their job is endless, nasty work,
But they don't get out of sorts,
And the fighters all respect 'em,
As they 're fearless, dead game sports !

CONVOY

THERE'S a lure in the summer landscape
When we've done our work at the line,
When we've finished with gas and bullets,
And the *obus'* drawn-out whine.
It's then that the Highways start calling,
And the greening fields of France,
And the yearning is strong to go rolling along
In a convoy of Ambulance.

*So crank the voitures up, my boys!
Make the old line twenty long;
Let the Flivver staff car lead it
And the camion tail the throng.
Then, as grey car follows grey car,
We will roll off free and gay,
In convoy, in convoy,
Down along the Grand Highway!*

When we're up at the front on duty,
We work as the wounded come in;
And it's not a life the most pleasant
To see wrecks where humans have been;

Convoy

We like our *repos* — when we get it,
And to go on *permission* we're strong;
But there's nothing so fine as to be in a line
Of a convoy that's rolling along!

So crank the voitures up, my boys!
Throw in your kit and trunk,
And to Henry's well-known rattle
We'll tour off with all our junk;
Let each grey car follow grey car
To some distant town in France
In a convoy, in a convoy,
Of the care-free Ambulance!

COMPRENDS PAS!

I 'VE struggled hard with phrase-books and with grammars
on the side,

And to *parlez-vous* with poilus most consistently I 've tried,

Till I thought I spieled the lingo of the land;

But I have n't learned a sentence or an idiomatic phrase

That could get you out of trouble (you get in in lots of
ways)

Like the statement that you did n't understand.

If, departing on *permission*, you should make the silly
break

To get in a first-class carriage (which a private should n't
take)

Where the ticket-man explains you should n't be;

And the train is bound for Biarritz instead of Aix-les-
Bains —

Talk in English, or don't even argue with the man,

Just look stupid and inform him, "*Pas compris.*"

If in traffic you 're caught doubling along a *route gardée*,

Or you wish to pass a sentry when you 're strolling round
some day,

Don't explain — you'll get in trouble if you try;

Comprends Pas!

Hide your learning if you 've got it, for all cases such as
this

Are the times, the saying has it, when our ignorance is
bliss,

And a simple "*Pas compris*" will get you by.

If I ever "travel west" and find I'm waiting at the gate
Of Heaven, and Saint Peter asks me why the hell I'm late,
Force of habit will dictate my swift reply ;
For I'm certain that his language will be foreign — any-
way

To such as me — and so I'll take a risky chance and say
A hurried "*Comprends pas*" and skid on by.

POST-MORTEM

EXCITEMENT, one thinks, would be the life
Of the soldier in France mixed up in the strife;
He's continually pictured amid the shells,
Enduring fifteen kinds of hells —
Camion men, and ambulanceers,
Air pilots, tank men, and engineers —
All are supposed, both day and night,
To be mixed up in some sort of fight —
Advancing, attacking, making a raid,
Or dashing through shell-fire to give first aid.
If we'd been in the places they've pictured us in,
We'd all long since have been deader than sin.
After your first excitement is through
You get mighty fed up, and nothing is new;
And it's then you resort, just to drive off the bore,
In those stove-side post-mortems about the war.

.

How you came over, new at the task;
The foolish questions you used to ask;
The time you tinkered a hand-grenade
And were such a damn fool that you were n't afraid!
Your letters home, those greenhorn crimes,
(Each one published in the *Spunksville Times*,)

Post-Mortems

Your first trip up to the Poste de Secours,
The shell whose explosion was premature ;
The night that the Boches shelled the road,
When a shell lit ahead, but did not explode ;
The dangerous cross-roads, where every day
The shells got some one going that way ;
The big attack, Boche souvenirs,
The insipid taste of all French beers ;
The time you broke down with a heavy load
Just where the guns fired across the road ;
The car that was smashed, and the *abris*, too, —
In fact all of the shells that came near you ;
Atrocities, speeches, Wilson's note,
How the people at home are off the boat ;
Gas-shells, machine guns, the sausage balloon,
Whether the war will be over soon ;
What of the Kaiser? — Is he afraid
Of what will happen with U. S. aid ?
Paschendale, Ypres, and scrap on the Aisne,
What happened last spring to the big cam-
paign ;
Why the English at Cambrai nearly got beat,
The Italian fiasco, the big retreat —

Any old topic 's as good as new
When passed out again for a stove review ;

En Repos

Life is a rehash, day by day,
The same old stuff in a different way.
We 're tired of war, and want it done,
Englishman, Frenchman, Dago, Hun.
But it still goes on, in its own sweet way,
No matter what any one seems to say.
And so we keep going, and stave off the bore
By our stove-side post-mortems about the war

“SYSTEM D”

THIS war is for “morals” we often are told,
It develops our honor and right;
It’s a “soulful uplifter,” it “brings out the best,”
It leads us from “darkness to light”;
But all of this talk about morals and such
Is compromised some, you will see
By that prevalent habit of take it or nab it
That is called by the French
“System D.”

When up at the front on some duty or other
And there’s nothing to do and you snooze,
And some passing poilu, paid five sous a day,
Drops in and departs with your shoes;
When your *essence* is stolen, or cooks sell your *pinard*
To the poilus who want a cheap spree,
Though perhaps not delighted, you don’t get excited —
It’s part of the game —
“System D.”

When your tools are all taken, you do not report it,
But tap some one else’s full set;
When the Lieut takes your coal, you just take a reprisal,
(The kitchen’s a pretty good bet!)

En Repos

And so it goes on, from the General down,
And adjusts itself quite equally,
This uplift of war-time, this shoplift of no crime,
This good moral game —
“System D! ”

SONG OF THE MESSENGERS OF MERCY

OH, the Ambulance is a lazy life,
The life of a care-free crew
That fritters away a lot of its time
With nothing whatever to do.
But it isn't as easy as you might think
To drive a Ford in France,
For the Ambulance Service sure is hard —
On the seats of the government pants.

*Yes, a care-free crew is the Ambulance —
We love to do as we please ;
We take our pleasures in generous measures
Despite the strict M. P.'s.
We're a humanitarian bunch of bums,
And it certainly seems a crime
That ambulance non-combatants
Should be always killing time.*

Oh, half of the time we curse our luck
Because we're back *en repos*,
But we get our fill of the dirty work
When up to the front we go.

En Repos

Oh, we travel about in the rear of the front
And squander our monthly pay,
And all that we care a damn about
Is our three square meals a day.

*Yes, a care-free crew is the Ambulance —
We love to do as we please ;
But we grouse and growl and raise a howl
If we cannot take our ease.
Each Ambulance man thinks he ought to be
In some other branch of the war,
And we crab like hell when we know blame well
That we're well off where we are.*

Oh, the Ambulance man is a humane bird
Who comes from across the sea ;
He comes, as he thinks, with avowed intent
To rescue Humanity.
But he soon determines that he can best
Diminish the Prussian pelf,
If he simply devotes his efforts to
Preserving his human self.

*Yes, a care-free crew is the Ambulance,
With materialistic views ;
We've dropped our illusions and foolish delusions
And taken to foreign booze ;*

Song of the Messengers of Mercy

The Ambulance man's sole object now

Is the greatest amount of fun,

And he's trying to save for the Land of the Brave

A worthless Son-Of-A-Gun!

WE WISH IT WOULD

WHENEVER the topics of talk run low,
Whenever the lull in the chatter comes,
When you think there's a dam in the usual flow
Of fruitless bull — some one succumbs,
And soberly lets this phrase descend,
“ When do you think the war will end ? ”

The men on the steamers that ride the foam ;
The *camion* drivers, or *camionnette* ;
The letters that come from the folks at home ;
And even the “ Madame ” in the *buvette* ;
They carry a burden of this one trend —
“ When do you think the war will end ? ”

You pick up a *poilu* along the route
Who asks for a lift toward the first-line trench,
And above the clatter you hear him shout
Some words you can't get with your palsied French ;
No need to tell him you “ don't comprehend, ” —
It's “ When do you think the war will end ? ”

Every one airily states his views
At length — till you wish that he would be hung ;

We Wish It Would

Every one asks it — and none refuse —

The foolishhest question that ever was sprung.

And before I forget it, my reader friend,

When do *you* think the war will end?

COMMUNIQUE'S

EACH Government, most every day,
Prints a brief *communiqué*
Concerning activities in the war,
Explaining the ends we're fighting for ;
But I've discovered, what is more —
You can't believe a word they say.

Our sector, just the other day,
Got very active in a way ;
The shell-holes 'round our *abri* door
Were multiplied by several score —
A dangerous factor to ignore,
And yet — “ *Rien à signaler !* ”

Last night a Boche without a qualm
Let fall near camp a noisy bomb
That blew a building all to whey.
“ That sure was awful,” you will say,
But hark to the *communiqué*, —
It says, “ The night was calm.”

Such things as these make one feel sore,
Make you regret to shed your gore —

Communiqués

I guess I'll quit and go away
Unless in some *communiqué*
A little notice they should pay
To what *I'm* doing in the war!

AROUND OUR STOVE

AROUND our barracks stove at night

We are mighty careless what we say ;
If anything 's not done up right,
We 'd do it better by a sight,
If we could only have our way,
Around our stove.

All discipline that's ever tried

We 're always ready to resent ;
We give our officers a ride
To take the sparkle off their pride,
Or else we euss the Government,
Around our stove.

Around our stove we make a fuss

About the risky things we've done ;
Or else pick flaws in some poor euss —
Tell what we 'd done, if it was us.
Why, battles have been lost and won
Around our stove !

You 'd think a crowd of anarchists

Had gathered, were you passing by,

Around Our Stove

Or pugilistic pacifists,
And not plain amb'lance motorists,
For, *mon Dieu*, how the bull does fly
Around our stove!

CAVE ABRIS

WHEN I first came to France and went out to the front
I was crazy to get in the midst of the fighting ;
I 'd volunteer always for any old stunt,
And I never once thought of *allezing* or liting ;
I then had much scorn for the caves and *abris* —
I preferred to be out where the *obus* were popping —
But now that I know they 're most like to hit *me*,
I pike for the *abri* without ever stopping.

*The abri, the abri, we go on the run,
We don't want to be targets for any Boche gun ;
We dive from our cars, and we thank all our stars
We 've an abri deep down that is safe from the Hun !*

It 's not as heroic, or handsome, or brave
As to stand 'mid the shells with a lit cigarette ;
But we really prefer it to six feet of grave —
For that 's about all, for your stunts, you will get ;
If they 're shelling a road — well, you have to go through
it,
Though you 're scared till you 're green, and you think
you are done ;

Cave Abris

But, finished your work, you don't stick 'round to view
it —

You make for the *abri* upon a dead run !

The abri, the abri, allez when you're done ;

We don't want to get friendly with any Boche gun ;

Take away your citations, and fine decorations —

Just give us an abri that's safe from the Hun !

AND WINTER 'S COMING !

WHEN I hit France, a Service man
Said wisely unto me,

“ You ’ve only got two blankets there —
Go buy another three.”

“ In summer ? ” I said with surprise ;
“ Why, sure,” he said, “ it ’s cold.”

I thought him crazy, but I bought,
And shoved across my gold.

Well, summer came, the days were warm,
But oh, Good Lord, the nights !

For feeling cold the Arctic zone
Had nothing — they were frights !

With blankets five, at 3 A.M.

I ’d feel stark frozen dead.

There was no warmth in Rue Raynouard’s
Pet acrobatic bed.

There, frozen stiff, I ’d lie and think
Of what he said to me,

And wonder why that ——— fool
Had only told me three !

THE WAR—ENCORE!

WE 'VE fought the battles of this war
A thousand times : — each little fight
Has caused the stove-side bull to flow
From early dawn to late at night;
From every phase and point of view
We 've talked the business o'er and o'er;
We 've guessed what Ludendorf would do,
Told how we 'd work it, — me and you.
We thought we had it all down right,
And yet last night, once more,
We settled the war!

We 've figured how it could be won
By either side, and picked the point;
We 've brought up troops for our attack,
We 've charged the line and gained the joint;
We 've chased the enemy with tanks ; —
Back toward the Rhine his legions pour ; —
We 've killed him off in close-filled ranks
And got the whole world's grateful thanks.
We thought we 'd finished up the row,
And yet, somehow, once more
We 'll settle the war!

En Repos

Last winter round our barracks stove
We figured how to meet the blow
The Germans said they'd give us when
They staged their giant springtime "show";
We've often said about this fight,
"Doug Haig sure could have saved the gore
By using all our plans so bright,"
(If they had only been more right!) —
We *had* it finished on the spot,
Yet now we've got, once more,
To settle this war!

HENRY ON THE GRANDE ROUTE

THESE foreign cars sound fine at home ;
They cost like holy sin ;
They have a strange and foreign look,
And rich men ride within.
But here, where they are all about,
They do not look so fine ;
Then, say ! how good it seems to see
A Ford come down the line !

You've got reputation, Henry ;
You've got millions running, too ;
Yet at home they call you road lice,
Which is merely French for *poux*.
They never saw these foreign tubs,
Stalled all along the "Route Gardée,"
While you whiz by a-hitting but
The highest high spots of the way.
You may have your little troubles,
You may lose your bolts and nuts,
But they wish they had you, Henry,
For you sure have got the "guts."

The other day my Fiat car
Was hitting quite a pace.

En Repos

I heard a car come on behind,
I cut loose for a race ;
I opened up to take the hill,
And then I gave a sigh,
For a poilu in a Flivver
Had swiftly passed me by !

You have got the makings, Henry,
And you 've got that U. S. sound ;
You have got a U. S. switch-key,
And a homelike sort of pound.
In the States they may mistreat you
As a jitney or a plough,
But in war they have to *get there*,
And you sure have shown them how.
You may have your little troubles,
You may lose your bolts and nuts,
But they hand it to you, Henry,
For you surely have the "guts."

You may take the Dago Fiat,
The Renault, the Berliet,
Just lead me to a Henry Ford —
I 'll swap you any day.
These foreign-speaking cars may sound
All right to foreign ears,

Henry on the Grande Route

But they never can touch Henry,
In a hundred thousand years!

You 're not so handsome, Henry,
As a fancy foreign car,
But your homely U. S. body
Has a finer look by far.
You maybe have but just two speeds,
Perhaps you 're done in lowly tin,
But where 's the man with soul so dead
Who says you 're not all there within!
What if you *do* have troubles small?
What if you *do* lose bolts and nuts?
You make them all bow down in praise,
For, Henry, you have got the "guts."

QUAND LA GUERRE SERA FINIE

AFTER the war we're going to go
To frolic in frivolous Paris;
We'll make a stream of champagne flow
From Etoile down to Saint Denis;
Through the Arc de Triomphe we will file,
And visit all the swell cafés;
We'll celebrate it in a style
Not equalled since the Hundred Days:
That's what we're really fighting for —
That party that we've got in store —
After the war.

After the war we're going to throw
Away these sombre khaki clothes;
We'll tell the officers to go
Back where the heavy timber grows.
Each one of us is going to wed
A charming little French soubrette,
Provided all of us are n't dead,
As we may well be some day yet.
We're ready any time to cease;
Why, all we're fighting for is peace —
After the war.

Quand la Guerre sera finie

After the war we'll take a trip
 Around the world by land and sea ;
We'll bum our way from ship to ship ;
 We'll be unhampered — we'll be free !
After a time we'll reach New York ;
 Then will commence a round of fun :
There'll be no bottle with a cork
 After it's over and we're done ;
The pace we'll hit will be a streak
When we get back to Amérique —
 After the war.

These are the plans that we have made
 For the day when the craze of war is past.
For the day we sometimes feel afraid
 Will never come must come at last ;
And when it does, we've doped it out
 In the manner I have just portrayed.
We've fixed it up to gad about,
 And these are the plans that we have made.
But all of our dreams are but idle foam ;
As a matter of fact, we'll hit for home —
 After the war !

AND ELSEWHERE

EPIC YEARS

THE star-shells flare ; the tortuous trenches wind
In snake-like turns from sea to mountain height.
Great shells of steel, designed by master mind,
Crash from the guns and kill ; they hiss in flight.
Long lines of men in faded blue and brown
March grimly up toward agony and pain,
Charge shell-torn lands of fire and steel, go down,
And lie and rot, their deaths perhaps in vain.
Come, come, O Bard, from out some unknown place,
Come and record, in songs and words of fire,
The noble deaths, the struggles of the race,
The fight to check an Emperor's desire !
Come, strike thy harp ; the force of man is hurled ;—
Give us an Iliad of the Western World !

WAR'S ABSOLUTION

A MONARCH's hopes, a people duped to fight,
Nor heed the object they were fighting for,
Conflicting aims of nations, each one right,
Have plunged the world, unwilling, into war.
Three years of tragic bloodshed, waste, and woe,
Three years of useless struggle on the field,
Of daily conflict with an unseen foe
And wholesale murder which no cause can shield,
Unless, hereafter, when the end shall be,
The right of war shall be denied to states,
And power of a real democracy
Shall purge the folly of unnatural hates.
Then firmly Freedom shall arise and stand
Where writhes the bloody snake of "No Man's Land."

FIVE MILES BEHIND THE LINES

THE Champagne hills were blue last night,
The western sky was flushed with red,
And the poilus played at a soccer game ;
Beyond, old Téton raised his head.

The poilus played at a soccer game,
While the heavy cannon boomed near by,
And, in the distance, dot-like, small,
Were the Boche balloons in the northern sky.

The poilus played at a soccer game,
Forgetting the war's infernal strife,
And the watchers laughed and talked and smoked
As if this play were their all in life.

The poilus played at a soccer game,
While the Boche balloons with seeing eye
Watched o'er the Champagne hills of France
From the reddening blue of the evening sky —
They hung and watched, and I wondered if they
Saw the poilus at their play.

CHAMPAGNE HILLS

OVER the sleeping little town
A silvery full moon casts its light,
Down o'er the barracks, gaunt and brown,
Down o'er the chalk mounds, low and white.

The outlined trees stand stark and bare;
The church spire towers o'er the silent street;
Long since the echoing bugle's blare
Has sounded the clarion for "retreat."

A silvery haze drifts thin and low;
The clumps of pines are an inky blue;
Down on the roofs of the barracks row
The moonlight glistens on the dew.

Then of a sudden comes a gun —
A crash, a lingering, echoing scream:
The stillness, the calm, the peace are done,
Vanished like fragments of a dream.

Come in a happier time, O Night;
Come soothe this agony and pain,
And bathe with all your tender light
These troubled hills of the Champagne.

Mourmelon le Grand
Champagne Front
March 1, 1918

DOWN ALONG THE AISNE

A FERTILE, lovely valley
Which is scarred by marks of strife ;
A host of red-tiled villages
Where ruin now is rife ;
Houses wrecked and roofs caved in,
All open to the rain,
And churches wrecked and battered —
Down along the Aisne.

Deserted are the villages
And overgrown the fields,
And autumns four have come and died,
And there have been no yields,
But only waste and shell-holes
Where there once was yellowing grain
And fruitful sounds of harvest —
Down along the Aisne.

Gun-pits scar the hillsides
And the trees are ripped and torn ;
The roads by wheels of cannon
Have been rutted deep and worn ;

And Elsewhere

Grim trenches cut the meadows
And the barbed-wire lines remain,
Their rust deep hid in wild grass —
Down along the Aisne.

When the roar of war is over,
And all the killing's done,
And a peace rests on the hillsides
And a silence on the gun,
Then the tender hands of Nature
Will touch and soothe your pain,
And bring back life and harvests —
Down along the Aisne.

Germoise, October 27, 1917

ON THE OISE, 1918

THE lilacs bloom by the castle wall,
Whose crumbling stones tell another age,
And spring, in our hearts, seems the best of all,
So fair has Nature set her stage.

The willows bud new leaves of green,
And, up on the hill in the forest deep,
Amid the underbrush between
The trees, the first new violets peep.

The spring again, so sweet and gay,
The spring recurrent ! . . . yet the guns
Beat and rumble, night and day,
Up where the battle's lifeblood runs.

The lilacs bloom by the castle wall,
And still will their blossoms scent the dawn
When the cannon's roar, and the bugle's call,
And we ourselves, are dead and gone.

Pont-St.-Maxence, April 15, 1918

ON PASSING THROUGH AMIENS, MAY, 1918

A BIT of ivy clammers o'er the wall
Of this forsaken house in Amiens ;
Its crumbling shell-torn stones about it fall,
Its street is lonely and devoid of men. . . .
Deserted is this city of the dead,
Unseeing, cold, its shutters blind stare down,
Unheeding of the lonely sentry's tread,
Insensate to the sadness of the town. . . .
Gone, gone the folk of all these pleasant streets,
Gone all the colors, all the swirl of life,
Gone all the sounds, save where the cannon beats,
And brings, each hour, new sadness to the strife. . . .
And yet, here where the ruins hourly fall,
This bit of ivy clammers o'er the wall.

THE GUNS!

THE guns! The guns!
They rumble and roar and pound;
The guns! The guns!
The night is a welter of sound;
Flashes that pierce the blackening sky,
Pits of flame in the woods near by,
Shells that go hissing along on high
From the guns!

The guns! The guns!
They rumble amid the waste;
The guns! The guns!
They're never in any haste;
Monsters of iron that never tire,
Endless they keep their rolling fire,
A hunger for steel's the sole desire
Of the guns!

The guns! The guns!
They mangle and tear and kill;
The guns! The guns!
They strike with an iron will;

And Elsewhere

Nor heeding nor stopping, their fire they pour,
And many's the lad that will hear no more
The sudden crash and the hiss and roar
Of the guns!

THE STAR-SHELL FLARE

OUT of the darkness of the night,
Over the guns' staccato crash,
Suddenly, silently, curving high,
Spreading a glow o'er the inky sky,
Showing the lines like an ugly gash,
Then drifting away in a breath of air —
The star-shell flare.

As o'er a pageant of the gods,
Wondrous it hangs, majestic, still,
Revealing beneath its searching glow
The wire and the shell-holes down below,
Lighting the slope of the fire-swept hill,
No longer green, no longer fair
In the star-shell's flare.

The eye of two armies, face to face,
It searches that riven strip of land,
The waste of holes, the lines of wire,
Waiting to turn a hail of fire
On perhaps a stray patrolling band —
What sudden deaths have happened there,
In the star-shell's flare!

And Elsewhere

It drifts and dies, and the darkness comes,
Twofold blacker than before.
Perhaps when this whirl with death is done,
And silence rests on the belching gun,
We'll think again of our days of war,
And the men we used to know out there,
In the star-shell's flare.

OVER THERE

CAMOUFLAGE ALL!

THE war has developed a singular art,
The scenery painter's special part ;
Deceiving, concealing beneath his paint,
Making things look like what they ain't,
Buildings and wagons and cannon, too,
He mottles and hides from the searching view
Of airplanes that hover in white *nuages* —
That 's what the French call "camouflage."

By a similar process my lady dips
Her brush to redden her faded lips ;
For this the broker waters his stocks ;
Cigars have pictures upon the box ;
The politician's broad black hat,
Most of his speeches for the matter of that ;
Sand in the sugar, water in milk,
The plain girl's stockings, made of silk,
Lovers' kisses and timid looks,
The lawyer's impressive shelf of books,
Comic sheets in the doctor's room,
Compliments carved on the dead-beat's tomb,
All that we say from birth to death,
A spearmint flavor on a beery breath,

Over There

Pomp and glory and wealth and fame,
The great reputation of What 's-His-Name,
Even the night bell on the garage —
Every damn bit of it “camouflage” !!

C'EST ÇA

I 'VE been roosting over where
They've a sentence, "C'est la guerre,"
That you hear reiterated o'er and o'er.
It's a cheerful little thing,
Hopeful and inspiriting,
And, translated into English, means
"That 's war."

When everything you see
Is as rotten as can be,
When life's a shaky gamble or a bore,
You 'll derive great consolation
From that patent observation,
For it's comforting to know it —
That it 's war.

You tote a gun and pack,
Rain a-trickling down your back,
And you sleep in some damp dug-out on the floor,
And you wake alive with fleas, —
Don't get irritated, please;
Just remember that it is n't sport —
It 's war.

Over There

You must live on rancid grub,
And they curse you for a dub,
Or rout you out to do some filthy chore,
And you have n't had a bath
For a month, — restrain your wrath,
And repeat that everlasting phrase,
“That 's war.”

If you 're like the cheerful French,
When the Boches strafe your trench
And you see your comrades slaughtered by the score,
You can get much satisfaction
From that obvious abstraction,
And you 'll simply shake your head and say,
“That 's war.”

And there is no more to tell
When you 've found that war is hell
(I *think* I 've heard that said somewhere before);
If you 're in it, you poor duffer,
Then you 'll have to grin and suffer
In the flames of hell — I 'm telling you
“That 's war!”

CIVIL LIFE

WE'RE used to the ways of the soldier man,
Moving, existing as best he can,
We're used to the *obus*, and first-line trench,
And the smoking stove and rickety bench ;
We're accustomed to sleeping in our clothes
In barracks cold as the arctic snows,
And wading in mud up to our knees,
Wearing those dog-goned roll puttees :
We're used to all the government things
Which the Q. M. drags in or the postman brings —
These, and all of this comfortless life
That's caused by Wilhelm's desire for strife.

We're used to it, yes, but what of the day
When we'll be (thank God!) out of government pay —
When once more we'll return to civil pursuits,
Far from bawling commands and salutes?
How will we take it? — it sure seems queer
To contemplate it from 'way out here —
Civilian clothes, thin socks, low shoes ;
Being able to wear whatever you choose ;
Neckties and collars, a clean white shirt ;
Showers, and bathtubs, and none of this dirt ;

Over There

Theatres, street-cars, and fine hotels ;
Housemaids and servants and front-door bells ;

Carpets, pianos, and furnace heat ;
Sleeping on something called a sheet ;
Ham and eggs, butter, and real white flour ;
Getting up for breakfast at any old hour ;
But, best of all in this life of ease,
Being able to do just as you please,
Telling corporal, lieutenant, and general, too,
To go to hell if it pleases you ;
Far from all military guff,
Reasonless orders and all of that stuff —
In fact, just being, once again,
Civilians — or better, just free men !

ENVOI

How will it be — I must stop, I fear,
For our corporal's bawling voice I hear —
(That officious fool, it's his belief
He's a cross between God and Commander-in-Chief).

C'EST DÉFENDU

YOU oft see a sign in France
With the little word *Défense*,
Which, translated, means "Forbidden " over here.
You will see this little sign
When you drink or when you dine,
Yet it never gives the poilus any fear.

It 's *Défense d'Entrer* when
You want a drink before it 's ten,
And *Défense* to sell a brandy there at all,
But you just go to the rear,
Say a word in Madam's ear,
And you 're in the place and served with trouble small.

It 's *Défense de Doubler — Passer*
All along the main highway,
But the *gendarme* never throws you in the pen ;
He just lets you pass on by,
Only sees with half an eye,
While he shrugs his shoulders saying, "*Ce n'est rien.*"

Oh, the poilus bear the brunt
When they 're working at the front ;

Over There

And they get but little pleasure from the game :
And the principal of these —
When the word *Défense* he sees,
He goes right ahead and does it just the same.

THE SONG OF THE CASUALTY LIST

If you think that this war is all cheering and song,
If you think it's a frolic that should n't be missed,
 It won't be so long
 Till you'll find you are wrong
By the long string of names on the casualty list.

*The casualty list, the casualty list,
The dead and the wounded, the missing and missed;
 The fellows who laughed
 On the day of the draft,
Their names will go down on the casualty list!*

The private who dreamed of an immortal fame
In a charge when he got a slight wound on the wrist,
 He turned up his toes
 While blowing his nose,
And down went his name on the casualty list.

*The casualty list, the casualty list,
The dead and the wounded, the missing and missed;
 The cross that he won
 Was a small wooden one
Inscribed with the name that went down on the list.*

Over There

There 's no one too lowly, and no one too proud
To be classed with the dead and the wounded and missed,
 It's neither exclusive
 Nor yet too obtrusive —
All names are alike on the casualty list.

*The casualty list, the casualty list,
It follows wherever the bullet has hissed,
 And there's always a place
 For your name or your face
In the infinite ranks of the casualty list.*

HAND GRENADES

THERE are many things of interest
Around this little war,
And often by experiment
You find out what they 're for ;
But there 's one thing, if you monkey,
You won't live to be afraid,
It 's that harmless-looking plaything —
The Hand Grenade!

They 're an innocent young handful,
And oft the rookies start,
With a hammer and a monkey wrench
To take them all apart.
Then occurs a loud explosion,
And then we all give aid
To find where he was scattered by
The Hand Grenade !

I was just like all the green guys
On coming to the front —
I picked them up and brought them in
And thought it quite a stunt.

Over There

Later on, when they exploded,
I learned to be afraid.
To lose your friends, just monkey with
The Hand Grenade !

Now when some green guy brings one in,
Just as a souvenir,
I do not stay to cuss him out,
But merely disappear ;
When it goes off we'll merely say,
When to his rest he's laid,
“ Poor fool, he got his playing with
A Hand Grenade ! ”

A REALLY QUIET DAY

“DEAR Folks At Home: — I am quite well,”

Wrote Sergeant William Jones,

“My health is good, our feed is fine,

As yet I’ve broke no bones.

“We’re in the first-line trenches now

To do a two weeks’ bit;

But things are tranquil, and we’re sure

Of never getting hit.

“For the Boche he does n’t strafe us much,

Though we give him all Hector.

For him it’s just continued hell;

For us, a quiet sector!

“So do not worry; I’m quite safe

Down in my shelter here.

It’s really no more dangerous

Than somewhere in the rear.”

So was writing Sergeant William Jones

When an *obus* came his way,

And blew things up quite fearfully

For such a quiet day.

Over There

The Sergeant, cursing fluently,
Got into quite a rage,
For the shell had spattered mud upon
His neatly pencilled page.

“—— — these shells,” the Sergeant said,
“They sure do get my goat!”
That’s what he said up in that trench,
(But it is n’t what he wrote!)

WAR'S ANNOYANCES

THE annoyances of soldiers are supposed, in civil life,
To be the shells and bullets and the sounds of endless
 strife ;

They think he gets quite weary of the trenches and the
 guns

And the water and the trench raids, and the sniping of the
 Huns ;

But were truth known, it is n't so — the front 's a peaceful
 place,

And the soldier's real annoyance is the back home popu-
 lace.

It's good old men who send him books of firm and helpful
 hints,

And tracts on keeping well and strong, and how to do up
 splints ;

It's parsons who will pray for him, and send trench Bibles,
 too,

And silly girls he never met who write him billets-
 doux ;

It's men who've not enlisted who always wish that he,
If he runs across a German, "would give him hell for
 me ! "

Over There

The romantic ladies pleading, "Oh, you *will* be *such* a dear,
Now get a Boche spiked hat for me, just as a souvenir!"
The man who writes, "Be sure and Kan the Kaiser while
you're there"

(He sends this warlike message from his office swivel
chair);

It's people safely back at home who always sternly write,
"The country has n't wakened to the fact we're in the
fight!"

They're nothing new, these pesterers of honest soldier folk,
But just the same ones, now transformed, who always will
provoke —

Here's just the same old pastor, with his droning parish
call,

And the gossiping old neighbor, with her tales beneath her
shawl;

The doctor, and the lawyer, and the man who wanted war,
(And who pleaded his exemption so that he could run his
store!)

Here's the meddler and the loafer and the boring family
friend,

And the silly débutante who chatters nothing hours on end;
The gusher of the tea-room now is hunting souvenirs,
The "Ladies' Temperance Circle" is still down on wines
and beers!

War's Annoyances

All, all are here — they're mobilized to help to win the
war,

They'll "do their bit back there at home," though Heaven
knows what for !

The soldier twice is bothered — both in front and in the
rear,

And the latter's most annoying, say the soldier men out
here !

THE POILUS

THEY are n't so much to look at in their clothes of faded
blue,

And with all their kits and traps they would n't pass a
stiff review ;

They look at rules and regulations with only half an eye,
And the *gendarmes* set to watch them turn their backs
and let them by ;

They 're a slender, moustached bunch of men, and little
every one,

But for all of their appearance they 're a match for any
Hun !

*Oh, the Poilus, the Poilus, with their guns upon their
back,*

*Every time they 've met the Hun they've given him
the sack ;*

*When hell is popping on the front, no matter how or
where,*

*You will find that it's the Poilus who are sticking
it, out there.*

When Joffre said, " We 'll hold the Marne," they gave the
Germans hell ;

Then they knocked the spots from Fritz down along
the Somme as well ;

The Poilus

Along the Aisne they set to rout the Kaiser's Prussian
Guard,

And they broke up his return attacks and whipped him
yard by yard ;

When Pétain said, " They shall not pass," before that hell,
Verdun,

They stuck it and they proved to be a match for any
Hun !

*Oh, the Poilus, the Poilus, with their guns upon their
back,*

*They've done the job up thoroughly, defending or
attack ;*

*It makes no difference what the work, it makes no mat-
ter where,*

*You will find that it's the Poilus who are sticking
it, out there.*

In Belgium or in Alsace, or down along the Aisne,

At Verdun, or at Craonne, or down in the Champagne,
Take them in artillery, or take them in the tanks,

Or take them in the aeroplanes, or take them in the
ranks, —

Anywhere along the line, — they're scrappers every one,

And they've fought it out and proved it, for they've
cleaned up on the Hun !

Over There

*Oh, the Poilus, the Poilus, with their guns upon their
back,*

*They are n't so very showy, but they've got the
soldier's knack;*

*In summer heat or winter snow, or in the star-shell's
flare,*

*It will always be the Poilus who will stick it out,
out there !*

OUR SENSE OF FUN

THIS war would be extremely drear
If we had not long since begun
To view events that happen here
Transfigured by our sense of fun.

For many daily incidents
To which we have been used,
Replete with humor quite immense,
Occur to keep the men amused.

Why, almost every single day
Some one is either killed or maimed
In some excruciating way —
Or maybe permanently lamed.

Just take, for instance, when last week
Our raiders, fooled by some mirage,
Too soon dashed forward like a streak
And ran into their own *barrage*.

When Smith, to show that he was calm,
Went on a sapping expedition,
They blew him skyward with a bomb —
Or with some other ammunition.

Over There

That don't compare with when we read,
As oft we do these cheerful days,
How bombing planes have sown their seed
On citizens and *embusqués*!

We pray that this philosophy
Continues as it was begun,
And thank whatever gods may be
For giving us our sense of fun.

And yet not one among the lot,
E'en as he laughs at some poor bloke,
But fondly hopes that he is not
To be the point of the next joke!

NORTHWARD HO!

An Arctic explorer, recently returned to London, states that the Esquimaux do not know that the war is going on. (*Paris edition, of the New York Herald.*)

AT last Utopia has been found,
A land where of war there is no sound,
No talk that's gone on for three years now —
Whether "Willy" or "Nicky" started the row,
"Kan the Kaiser," "*Pas bon la guerre*,"
Of prices raised on the daily fare.
Things go on as they always go,
And he's quite content, is the Esquimau.

No Belgian Relief or Orphan Days
Have disturbed his peaceful, placid ways;
He never read headlines about the strife,
Or saw the Kaiser cartooned in "Life";
He never saw all this *camouflage* sham,
Or read a Hindenburg telegram.
In fact up there in the Arctic snow
He's really quite happy — the Esquimau.

War news, autocracies, a peace that is just,
Gott, the Kaiser, Bethmann-Hollweg's crust,
Cannon, machine guns, the *obus'* whine,
The rocking-chair patriot's militant line,

Over There

Trenches, aeroplanes, "No Man's Land" —
None of these things have disturbed his band.
Slothful and soft in peace they grow,
But they quite enjoy life, do the Esquimaux!

They've never been fooled by the popular craze
Of hunting for news in *communiqués*.
In the work of the censors they yet have to see
The expression of ideal democracy.
They had not the need, nor even the chance,
To issue an "Iceberg Loan" for France.
And so in spite of their ice and snow,
They are not bad off — are the Esquimaux!

“CAPOUT”

YOU may think that fame immortal
May be garnered from the war,
If by daring deeds you 're finished
So that you exist no more.
But you 'll find that you are also
One whom Fame will give the boot,
For all they 'll say when you are done
Will simply be —
“Capout!”

Daring privates volunteering
To pull some fancy stuff
Often think their show of bravery
Will give their rep a puff.
But they 'll find, when they are potted,
That nobody gives a hoot:
They 'll be turned under like the rest
And mentioned as —
“Capout!”

When the daring aviator
On his first trip at the front
Tries to equal famous Guynemer
By a very reckless stunt,

Over There

The Boche will dip and get him
And he 'll land upon his snoot,
And those watching will not sorrow,
But will merely say —
“ Capout! ”

At the front there is no weeping,
And for the dead no fame,
And before your own fine doings
There were thousands just the same.
If you plan to be Immortal,
Just remember, you galoot,
They 'll forget your name and doings
When you 're just a plain
“ Capout! ”

ALLIES

Two guns were resting side by side,
Two guns of very different spans,
A monster cannon, gaping wide,
The other just a *soixante quinze*.

The mighty railroad gun was proud —
He was the latest great invention:
He held himself above the crowd,
Nor to it paid the least attention.

“*Bonjour*,” the *soixante-quinze* remarked,
“You are a stranger here, I see.
I’m glad to see that you’ve embarked
To help us save democracy.”

The Big Gun turned an icy stare
Upon the impudent recruit.
He said, “Come to attention, there!
And also — fire me a salute!”

“Say!” cried the little fellow then,
“Whom do you think you’re talking to?
Don’t try to pull that stuff again;
You’ve yet to find out who is who.

Over There

“ We’ve done without you up till now;
I’d like to ask you, just for fun,
Who won the Marne and saved the row?
And who it was that held Verdun?

“ Because you’re always in the rear
And throw three tons of steel away,
You never have the slightest fear —
You great big noisy *embusqué!*”

The Big Gun flashed an angry frown
And rolled off with a vicious snort,
Remarking, “ I shall mark you down
Upon my very next report!”

And so, although against the Huns
They fight to further the same plans,
All *soixante-quinzes* despise Big Guns,
And Big Guns hate the *soixante-quinzes*.

THE EMBUSQUÉ IN PEACE AND WAR

ALL men have been sorted these warlike days
Into various species of *embusqués*.
Safe in the rear they 're supposed to lurk,
Missing their share of the dirty work ;
And each is condemned by the critical view :
What the other man thinks he *ought* to do.
Thus *embusqués* are diverse and many.
Though by this rule there are hardly any
To the fellow at home or around that region,
To the man in the trench their name is legion !

Artillerymen, doctors, brancardiers,
Ambulance-drivers, infirmiers ;
Those in the service behind the line ;
The soldiers campaigning in Palestine ;
Hospital units, men of munitions ;
Those who hold down the soft positions ;
The ones who by constant vertebral wear
Erase the plush from a cushioned chair ;
The voluble statesman and his backer ;
Clean on down to the just plain slacker,
Our backward friend of the physically fit,
Who talks and *talks* about "doing his bit."

Over There

Each is accused through the endless list
Till all of them hop on the pacifist!

The name is new, but what's a name?
We've had them among us just the same,
And shall have when we've finished the strife—
The *embusqués* of civilian life.
There'll be plenty of indigent nabobs
Who might be working at honest jobs:
That proverbial fellow, the gentile bum,
Who hits it high on his dad's income,
The society beau, and the suave head waiter,
The capitalist and the speculator,
All of the lichens of every trade,
The travelling companion, the lady's maid,
The free-lunch loafer in the saloon,
And th' inevitable brush-broom coon —
All doing nothing in manifold ways,
Every last one of them *embusqués*!

AVIATION

YOU don't mean to say you don't feel it —
The urge to be up in the air,
To swoop and to dip and to wheel it,
Like that boy in the Spad over there?

I tell you there 's no life to match it ;
You live well — in comfort and ease.
In the army — perhaps you don't catch it !
In the air you can do as you please.

There 's no one can give you an order,
When you 're up there alone in the sky.
You can fight, or else light for the border,
And either you do or you die.

On leave you can swank it and swagger —
You 're always dressed up fit to kill.
You can walk with a strut or a stagger ;
You've *entrée* wherever you will.

You've excitement and chance for advancement
And honor — and that 's the plain truth.
What need of further enchantment ?
It 's the game of all others for youth !

TO FRITZ

YOU are not so bad a fellow

When we take you one by one,

You 've got a fair amount of "guts,"

Judging all the things you 've done.

We admit you 're quite a soldier —

If you 've officers a score —

And the fights you 've made against us

Sure have made us pretty sore.

But for all your mailed-fist soldiering, you were never in
the rank

Of the Scotchman or Canadian, the Poilu or the Yank!

You 've a brainy bunch of generals,

Although the brainy work they 've done

Has brought about but little else

Than giving you the name of "Hun."

You 're an awkward sort of person,

But your science sure is fine;

It 's the truth, and we admit it,

It is hard to break your line.

But for all your fancy science, you are n't in the fighting
rank

Of the Anzac or Canadian, the Poilu or the Yank!

To Fritz

You sure can land an awful punch,

You face your danger like a man,

You try your best to win the war,

And yet you never somehow can.

You 've had us oft at fearful odds,

And yet the Marne has told its tale;

You did your damndest at Verdun,

And yet your efforts only fail:

The secret, Fritz, is simply this — you are n't in the fighting rank

Of our Anzac, or our Scotty, or our Poilu, or our Yank!

“LA BELLE MUSIQUE”

EACH kind of a shell has a song of its own

It invariably chants on its long arching flight,
From the time it ascends with a whimpering drone
To the hair-raising scream when it starts to alight.
If the tune is prolonged, then everything 's well —
You know it 's not you it is coming to see ;
But listen a bit, you can easily tell,
What sort of a guest it is going to be.

There 's the *ping* of the bullet, the gas-shell's *thump*,
And the *zoo-bum-bang !* of the “grosse marmite” ;
There 's the muffled *thud* of the harmless “dud”
That falls at your very feet.
There 's the obus' *zoo-oo-oo : ker-RUMP !*
The *whiz* of the “*éclat*,” and wicked whirrs
Of the shrapnel-burst ; but the very worst
Is the *tac-tac-tac* of the “mitrailleuse.”

Each kind of a gun takes a part in the show
With its songs and its solos all marked on the score,
The rifles sing treble, the cannon take low
In that Wagneresque comedy-opera, War ;

La Belle Musique

But when it commences that ominous sound,
Be the audience German, or if it be *Ally*,
It frankly retires and stays underground
From overture to the last grand finale.

There 's the *ping* of the bullet, the gas-shell's *thump*,
And the *zoo-bum-bang* ! of the "grosse marmite" ;
There 's the muffled *thud* of the harmless "dud,"
If the music 's quite complete.

There 's the obus' *zoo-oo-oo* : *ker-RUMP* !
The *whiz* of the "éclat," and wicked whirrs
Of the shrapnel-burst ; but the worst of all
Is the *tac-tac-tac* of the "mitrailleuse."

THE SOLDIER'S CREED

CUT out your mournful talk of death,
And play your gayest tune ;
Bring out your jokes and laughs and jests,
And stop your thoughts of last bequests,
Be it over late or soon.

Sing all the songs we used to know,
And the ragtime with a swing ;
Take out your black-gloved mourning folk ; —
They don't know life is just a joke.
Who cares what luck may bring ?

We want to whistle while we march,
And when the front is hell ;
If we are hit, why, we are hit ;
Your worry will not help a bit,
Or keep away a shell.

For the soldier's life is a careless life ;
We pass our troubles by ;
We smile beneath our crabs and kicks,
And grin at all the Boche's tricks,
And let the minutes fly.

The Soldier's Creed

So don't bring us your arguments,
And tell us who 's to blame ;
If we 're in war, why, we 're in war ;
We don't care what we 're fighting for,
We 're here to play the game.

So bring on smokes, and bottles old,
And fill the wine-cups up ;
For we should worry what 's to come ;
As long as we can get our rum,
Forget old Bertha Krupp !

So don't tell *us* our chance of death ;
We 'll keep our eye on life ;
But come and have a smile with us,
And josh and joke awhile with us —
And let 's forget the strife.

PERMISSION!

TIME was when I honestly longed for the day
That we 'd go to the front for some action.
I was then a recruit — a poor simple galoot —
And was ripe for a row or a ruction.
But now — well, it 's different ; I 've had quite enough
Of this damnable war of perdition ;
I don't fall no more for this patriot stuff —
All I want is to go on permission !

At first I was keen to be risking my life —
To go over the top and attack :
I was n't dismayed at the thought of a raid
When the most of us would n't come back ;
But now, when they call for a few volunteers
To go out on a bomb expedition,
The others respond, while I join in the cheers —
For the time 's getting near to permission !

It was not long ago that I used to have hopes
That I 'd get a promotion and such ;
But six weeks of trenches, their filth and their stench,
Ain't made me repine for it much.

Permission!

Ambition sinks low in the face of war's taunts ;

Get away with your lousy commission ! —

There's only one thing that a soldier man wants :

Let me get out of here — on permission !

OVERCOATS OF BLUE

YOU may tack on fuss and feathers
And plumes and golden braid,
Or choose a gorgeous uniform,
As striking as is made ;
Dress your soldiers as you like,
But still it will be true,
You 'll have to take your hat off
To the Overcoats of Blue !

Oh, the Overcoats of Blue ! The Overcoats of Blue !
They 're soldiers of the finest, are the Overcoats of Blue !

YOU may take your men in khaki,
Your men in brown and grey,
They 're first-class fighting soldiers —
They 'll prove it any day !
We 'll honor every one of them
For all that they 've been through,
But you 'll have to give the laurels
To the Overcoats of Blue !

Oh, the Overcoats of Blue ! The Overcoats of Blue !
They 're the finest fighting soldiers, are the Overcoats of
Blue !

Overcoats of Blue

When this war is done and finished,
We 'll have a grand parade,
And to all the Allied soldiers
Will honor due be paid ;
But you 'll see, in all their glory,
At the head of the review,
Just the ordinary poilus —
The Overcoats of Blue !

The Overcoats of Blue ! The Overcoats of Blue !
They will march before the finest, will the Overcoats of
Blue !

FOR FRANCE TO-DAY

WHY do we fight, we from a distant shore,
Removed, contained, scarce touched by all the strife,
Far from the thunders of a foreign war,
Who might in peace have followed all our life?
Our debt to France? — incurred in times of old,
Graced by the workings of a despot king? —
Rochambeau, Lafayette, we oft are told;
Our bell of freedom which they helped to ring —
No, none of these; forget the ancient score;
A greater thing: — for France to-day, we fight;
Our living debt to France is even more;
Her struggling battle is our cause of right.
For fine-souled France, a star too bright to go,
We come to battle back the tyrant foe!

TOUJOURS LA FRANCE !

PERHAPS, if you've read these effusions,
And found them imprudently packed
With a lot of irreverent allusions
Surprisingly wanting in tact,
You'll think we are blind to all virtues, —
Just cynics a-warming the bench, —
But before it's too late, let us hasten to state —
Thank God, we've been with the French !

As soldiers, it's only verbose to repeat
Their praise in these doggerel tunes ;
The ace among nations we'd hail, were it meet,
From a couple of bum buffoons ;
Their manners, their ways of expressing themselves,
Their courage which nothing can quench —
The humanest lot that were ever begot —
Thank God, we are with the French !

America's long preparations are done
And her aid is beginning to count,
And because of her efforts the war will be won
Or to that it is going to amount.

Over There

But in spite of our power, resources, and wealth,
When it comes to the last final wrench,
The victorious Yanks, from command to the ranks,
Will thank God they 're with the French !

ENVOI

WE have written our joys and our sorrows,
And our jests that have passed off the time ;
We have given no care for to-morrows,
Nor bothered with thoughts in our rhyme ;
We 've sung as we 've talked in the barracks,
And at *poste* 'round the grey ambulance,
But back of the chaff, and the jest, and the gaff
Is the feeling we have — for France !

Oh, we most of us came for the reason
Of adventure or playing the game,
Or of doing our duty in season,
Or of leaving a life that was tame ;
But we 've done that, and now we 've new reason,
Artillery, tanks, ambulance —
If they 'd let us go 'way, we would most of us stay
And stand by the battle — for France !

Oh, it isn't in words that we show it, —
They 're too feeble to tell what we feel ;
It 's down in our hearts that we know it,
It 's down in our souls that it 's real.

Over There

So we stick to our work as we find it,
And forget the caprices of Chance,
For we know that the price of the big sacrifice
Is little enough — for France !

COMPENDIUM OF FOREIGN PHRASES

COMPENDIUM OF FOREIGN PHRASES

Abri — Any kind of a shelter, ranging from a small piece of galvanized iron to a forty-foot dug-out, and endowed with the mythical quality of impenetrability as regards German shells. Consequently an *abri* is n't so much a bodily protection as a mental refuge. *Abris* thus are usually pervaded with an air of security, but with none of any other sort.

Allez — *allezing* — To go, to get out, or, in the imperative, to beat it.

Barrage — A curtain of fire in front of advancing troops to prevent the enemy from getting out of his trenches into the open, and to persuade him to get into his *abri*, where he can be conveniently bombed out and made prisoner. Regarded as one of the nuisances of war by ambulance-drivers and staff officers, whom it frequently disturbs at all hours of the night.

Beaucoup — *bon* — Much, many — good. The major and most necessary part of an American's French vocabulary.

Blessé — One who is wounded. The species come in two varieties — the stretcher cases, and those who are able to sit up in the ambulance.

Brancardier — A French stretcher-bearer, usually of the older classes. The principal character around a *Poste de Secours*. Too much cannot be said for the bravery and the untiring work of these men.

Briquet — A cigarette-lighter. A piece of war hardware,

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used as a substitute for matches, an office which it ably fulfils, refusing to light with mechanical regularity. There are two kinds, the fuse *briquet*, and the *essence*, or gasoline, *briquet*. The fuse *briquet* consists of a flint and a yard or two of yellow cord, which serves principally to ignite the pocket when not properly extinguished. The *essence briquet* is manufactured from cartridges, shell-cases, and other forms of munitions, and is usually decorated with Boche buttons and coins, or else figures in the nude. It contains anywhere from two drops to five litres of *essence*, according to the audacity of the poilu who bums it from the motor-car driver. Its chief value is keeping the poilus occupied and out of mischief. To keep a *briquet* in repair would require the services of two mechanics, a filling station, a machine shop, and any number of interested spectators. The *briquet* is not good for anything, and therefore makes an excellent souvenir. It is to the rapid sale of *briquets* that the value of the franc on the exchange markets owes its sudden rise.

Buvette — A bar, a small café in a village, a drinking establishment. Anywhere where a French Madame can store a barrel of *pinard* and a couple of glasses. The parent of the saloon and the country cousin of the swell café; but, like most other people, it does n't pattern much on its relatives. For legal purposes the *buvette* in the war zone is closed during the greater part of the day, but for practical purposes one might as well command the war to stop. To enter a *buvette* during forbidden hours, one does not necessarily have to speak French. The

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international signal of the low whistle through the key-hole will do the work.

Camion — *camionette* — Motor trucks used for the transportation of troops and war materials. They are particularly used to obstruct all other traffic on the roads, especially staff cars and ambulances. A *camion* train *en route* resembles a dust storm on the Sahara. The *camionette* is merely a lighter and less objectionable species of the brute. The only *camion* that an ambulance man can tolerate is the one that brings the mail.

Camouflage — In American newspapers *camouflage* is supposed to be an intricate and vast system of concealment of the works of war from the enemy. In reality it is more usually a few hunks of burlap and leaves hung up over some place like a gun location or a munitions dump — thus making it easily distinguishable from the surrounding terrain when viewed by enemy aviators. Wagons and cannon and *camions* are also camouflaged by alternate splotches of green and brown paint — making them objects of curiosity for miles around. The last place for a real artist is in the *camouflage* department. What is needed is a good cubist or futurist, or, for the finest and most delicate work, a house painter. *Camouflage* is much less effective and extensive than reputed, and its chief utility has been as a subject for literary and imaginary flights by ambitious writers and newspaper men — at so much per flight.

Capout — Dead, finished, done for, out of the running. A word of German origin, the original meaning of which was “to decapitate” or to cut the throat, but which has

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since been expanded as a slang expression to include anything which is destroyed, or any one who is finished off. The word has since been adopted by the French. If you ask a German prisoner if he is contented to be taken, he invariably replies, "Ja, nix capout." There is not much sentimentality about death at the front, and the one simple word *capout* takes the place of the flowers and the weeping, the eulogistic sermon, and the elegy. *Capout* is the universal epitaph of the French soldier, although the authorities sometimes paint "Mort pour la France" on the *croix de bois*. *Capout!* Sometimes he is permitted to rest in peace with this simple benediction, but often he is further molested by the placing of a galvanized iron wreath on the grave. "The paths of glory lead to wreaths of tin!"

C'est ça — "That's it." "That's right."

C'est la guerre — "It's the war." The *poilu's* customary explanation of his discomforts, and Madame's customary explanation for her overcharges.

Champagne — What prevented the Germans from reaching Paris in 1914. This is why the Germans call it "The Bottle of the Marne." Why poets eulogize France, and why American prohibitionists are pacifists.

Citation — Commendatory recommendation in orders periodically passed out by Headquarters for the encouragement of the soldiers. At the front a Citation is only looked at so-so, but through a genial conspiracy of silence those at home are left to draw their own grandiloquent conclusions.

Communiqué — The daily official bulletins issued by Head-

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quarters by which the actual progress of the war is concealed, and by which the general public can be let down easily to a big defeat, and overwhelmingly elated by a small success. The Boches are past-masters at the handling of *communiqués*.

Comprend — To understand. The most useful phrase for an American in difficulty. Most often, in such cases, used in the negative, *Comprends pas*.

Convoy — When *en route* in going from place to place, ambulance and *camion* sections travel together in groups, usually of twenty. This is called a "convoy."

Défense — Forbidden; something legally forbidden (but which in practice is usually overlooked). The proper come-back on being told that a thing is "*défense*" is "*Ça ne fait rien*." (That does n't matter, That does n't make any difference!) The Frenchman thinks that German stupidity is best exhibited by the fact that when he sees a sign forbidding him to do anything, he has n't the imagination to disobey it. Nearly everything in France is "*Défense*"; but in practice little or nothing is denied or forbidden — especially to the *poilu*.

Éclat — An explosion; the bursting of a shell; also applied to the fragments of a shell, which are called "the éclats."

Embusqué — Slacker, loafer, or, as the French say, one who is hiding himself in the bushes. Every one in the war zone thinks every one else is really an *embusqué*, and is convinced that his own work is the most difficult and dangerous. B. C. Wohlford's poem "The Slacker" aptly sums up the situation:

Compendium of Foreign Phrases

THE SLACKER

Says the man engaged in business
To the man who haunts his club,
"Oh, you slacker, start producing,
Whip the Kaiser, and his sub."

While the army clerk in Paris
Adding figures in a chair,
Types his friends, "Come, don't be slackers;
Go enlist; get over there."

And his former comrade grumbles
As he steers his ambulance,
"Yellow slacker, back in Paris,
He's the softest job in France."

Then his car rolls by some cannon,
And the gunners all remark,
"What a smug contented slacker!
Why, his job is just a lark!"

And the dirty, frozen poilu
Slowly plodding from his trench,
Grunts, "Artillery, — oh, what slackers,
Far from mud, grenades, and stench!"

While the stalwart shock divisions
Coming forward to attack
Sneer, "The ordinary poilus,
It's a shame the way they slack."

But the curse goes even further,
For the crews that man the tanks
Say, "Compared with us what slackers
Are the men who fill the ranks!"

So, although you're quite heroic
And your deeds are far from tame,
Don't be boastful, just remember
You're a slacker all the same.

B. C. WOHLFORD

From *The American Field Service Bulletin*

Compendium of Foreign Phrases

Gendarme — A French military policeman; it is his duty to direct traffic and see to the enforcement of the military regulations.

Infirmiers — Internes in the military hospitals who take charge of the wounded. It is their particular duty to enter into controversies with ambulance-drivers over the *blessé's* tag, and the permitted number of stretchers and blankets.

Kan the Kaiser — War slogan of American troops who have so far not been under the fire of His Majesty's "Busy Berthas." The Kaiser is as yet reported to be at large.

La belle musique — "The beautiful music." French ironic phrase applied to an artillery bombardment.

M. P.'s. — U. S. Military Police — not "Members of Parliament." Their duty is to make things as disagreeable as possible for the private.

Madame — The title universally given to the hard-working, middle-aged French woman who runs the *buvette* and takes care of the farm and farmhouse while her husband is at the front.

Marmite — French slang for a large high-explosive shell. Literal meaning, "bucket" or "saucepan."

Mort — "Dead," one who is dead.

Nuage — "Cloud"; used in this volume for purposes of rhyme.

Obus — French slang for any kind of a shell.

Pacifist — One who is a conscientious objector to bearing arms, but who has no objections whatever against having others bear arms for him.

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Pas bonne la guerre — “The war’s no good” — or what Sherman said translated into French; a password among poilus anywhere.

Permission — Leave of absence, supposed to be seven days every four months. What the soldier lives for. It used to mean Paris and civilization, but lately it has been changed to Aix-les-Bains and surveillance by the Y. M. C. A. The soldier no longer has any more reason to live. Besides — *permissions* are usually suppressed about the time they fall due.

Pinard — Technically known as “*vin rouge ordinaire*,” ordinary red wine. It is one of the main products of *ravitaillement*. “*Pas de pinard, pas de soldat*” (no wine, no soldier), says the poilu.

Poilu — Why Germany has n’t won the war.

Poste de Secours — Dressing, or clearing, station near the trenches where the *blessés* are brought to be sent down by ambulance to the hospital.

Ravitaillement — The process of bringing up food and supplies to the troops in the trenches. Most of the supplies are carried up to within three miles of the trenches by motor trucks and large wagons, and from there they are taken up in dispersed quantities by hand and by small carts to the men in the trenches. All the work is done at night without lights. To have *ravitaillement* trains on the road ahead of him is the bane of the ambulance-driver’s life.

Route gardée — A military road of main importance. It is under the traffic guard of the none too strict *gendarme*. *Camion* trains going on it are forbidden to pass one

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another (or to "*doubler*"), and the speed limit is prescribed but never enforced.

Rue Raynouard — The old American Field Service Headquarters in Paris.

Sausage balloons — Observation balloons which are put up four or five miles behind the lines in order to spot shots for the artillery and generally observe what the enemy is doing behind his lines. They afford great amusement to the poilus, who turn out in a gay mood for miles around, to see one of them brought down in flames by an enemy aviator. It is very spectacular, although the observers, who jump out in parachutes at the approach of the enemy machine, are seldom injured. However, it is a rather expensive form of amusement, and the only regret of the military authorities is that they have no way of charging the poilus an admission fee.

Soixante-quinze — The famous French 75-millimetre cannon; the principal cause of the German defeats at the Marne and elsewhere. There are two things the poilu swears by — his *pinard* and the *soixante-quinze*.

Spad — The French *plane de chasse*, or fighting plane, by far the best and swiftest on the front, and certainly the most graceful when in flight.

"*System D*" — French slang expression for the taking of trivial articles which are supposed (by the one who takes them, at least) to be of more use to him than to the owner. "System D" also implies that the one taking such articles must be clever enough not to get caught at it — which he usually is. The term is also applied to any on-the-quiet method of acquiring anything for-

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bidden. It is at the same time a justification and an epitaph for all petty irregularities.

Téton — The name of a mount, which is really only a good-sized hill, southeast of Rheims, in the Champagne district.

Voiture — The French appellation for any article which moves on wheels. A wagon, a *camion*, a staff car, a taxicab, an ambulance — all go under the name of *voiture*. After a few months at the front the ambulance man thinks of his ambulance only as *voiture*. His *voiture* is his home, and, like most homes, the source of most of his worries. Commonly shortened into “*voit.*”

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